

# THE REGISTER

BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL  
WINTER, 1994

# THE REGISTER

Winter, 1994

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Students in Classes I through VI are invited to submit original writing and art work.

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GOOD LUCK!

KEVIN ROCHE

*REGISTER* ADVISOR *EMERITUS*

## THE SKY WAS CRYING...

The sky was crying but I wasn't. I stood in my boots in a growing puddle on the corner of the street, laughing, thinking, waiting. It amused me that I could stand ankle-deep in water and still have dry toes. The rain kept falling and despite the fact that it had been raining for four consecutive days, I welcomed the flow of water from the sky. I tilted my head and tried to catch the drops in my mouth. Cars drove by. People stared, perhaps wondering what I was doing standing in the rain on an early Saturday morning. A man stopped and asked if I wanted a ride. I merely smiled and shook my head no. A cat dove quickly under a parked car, looking for some shelter. Stooping down, I called to it, "Here kitty, kitty; it's okay." It slowly made its way toward me and rubbed its wet body against my leg. I wondered whether or not animals could really understand human words and feel human emotions. Lost in my thoughts, soothed by the steady pitter-patter of the rain and the smell of the ocean, I fell into a trance.

Suddenly, it occurred to me that I would never understand many things about life. I'd never understand why waiting at a red light

annoyed me so much, or why I liked the smell of laundry after it had been dried outside on the clothesline. It amazed me that I could spend an entire lifetime counting numbers and never reach a final one. I tried to think of a definition for infinity, but all I could think of was "forever." But forever was also the amount of time between a Monday morning and a Friday night. Forever was forty-five minutes of Latin class. Yet forever was forever. It was such an impossible concept.

I realized that I'd never figure it out, just like I'd never know what makes one human love another, why picking one's nose is not proper etiquette, or why dogs chase their tails.

For some reason, none of it mattered, and I knew that I wasn't supposed to know the answers to these questions. Some things just *were*, and I was happy despite the fact that everything was coming to an end.

I smiled and looked at my feet, submerged in water, yet perfectly dry. Everything was going to be just fine.

—Kristen D'Avolio, *I*



## I USED TO CALL...

I used to call  
those little lazy  
dusky  
dust motes  
that make the air sparkle  
sunbeens.  
I meant sunbeams  
of course  
but then my tongue  
was young.  
Maybe  
Sunbeens is better anyway.  
They say we were all  
Once a star.

*—Malka Older, II*



## WHILE WE SPOKE OF YEATS

While we spoke of Yeats  
Inside the classroom  
The lights  
Of the baseball game  
We didn't go to  
Lit up the brilliant,  
Deep  
Purple  
Sky  
Which was like  
A poem  
Outside the window.

*—Malka Older, II*



## NINETWENTY

Looking at her thighs was a religious experience. Just thinking of them made me think of Gordon and the Femmes and how true he was. Her jeans clung so tightly to her legs that one couldn't really concentrate on anything else, after looking. Once my eyes met hers, there was a certain feeling, a fleeting question of conscience, but a feeling all the same. It didn't help when I looked up awhile later and she was staring at me.

Deciding that I could talk to her, I left my spot by the fire and followed her to the water. She just glanced back and laughed as her hair fell over her face in perfect disarray. "So what's your name?" she asked with a smirk.

"To experience pure bliss all at once and remembering to forget my name in the process, what's yours?"

"To be honest, it's not that important."

"What are you doing?"

"I'm in bliss."

We continued to walk by the sulking waves as they slivered onto the shore, full of regret. Lightning dashed through the sky nonchalantly, acting as if it had a better place to play. The moon hung in the sky as a memory suspended in time. The background was a pinkish shade of black, highlighted by stars light enough not to see them.

"Do you have any wine?" I asked.

"Here."

"Nah, I don't drink." I laughed softly as she looked at me. I tried to figure out what I was doing and who I was doing it with and I really didn't know. Thinking is always hard when you're with a girl who's not yours, doesn't plan to be, but who, you both know, will be by dawn. It all seemed too easy, as if it was rehearsed.

"Do you have any dreams?" I asked, trying to make conversation.

"No; they are too depressing to fail at."

"Well, what if one comes true?"

"That's worse than if they don't."

Now I was the one who was confused.

"What do you mean?"

"Dreams aren't supposed to come true; that's why they are called dreams. Dreams are not reality. When you dream, you move into another dimension, a whole new world. I have goals and dreams. I expect to reach my goals, and I'm disappointed when I don't. I don't expect to achieve my dreams."

"Why not?"

"Because then I'd have everything, no pain, no reason to live, nothing to look forward to, no ambition, no anything. After I had everything, my life would be a shell. Empty."

—John Hauck, *I*



## SUMMER PEOPLE

It was the summer of 1986. I was the typical ten-year-old: I built forts with my friends in the forest across the street, idolized Madonna, ogled George Michael, devoured Judy Blume books, and ate peppermint-chip ice cream by the gallon. When my parents planned a two-month summer vacation in Orleans at Cape Cod, my care-free, idyllic existence was shattered by the prospect of sixty-one days alone on the beach with nothing to do. My reluctance was transformed into a sullen, brooding silence that lasted the entire two-hour trip to the cottage. Life only got worse when I discovered I had to share a room with my little sister, who at that time worshipped and emulated my every move. Finally I resigned myself to a summer of boredom and monotony: my first week at the Cape was spent collecting hundreds of seashells whose novel appeal disappeared within the first couple of days. The summer looked bleak.

The town of Orleans was very provincial: they had a movie theater, a miniature golf course, a small shopping mall, a public garden, a vintage ice-cream parlor, and about four or five restaurants. One day, while walking back from the ice cream parlor where I had purchased a chocolate cone with jimmies (they didn't have peppermint chip), I decided to stop and sit on the jetties to pass some time before dinner. While balancing myself on the jagged rocks, I discerned the figure of a young boy seated at the far end of the jetty, his feet dangling in the water. I had never before walked all the way to the end for fear of falling into the ocean, but today, inspired by all my ten-year-old competitiveness, I swaggered out and sat down next to him.

"Hi!"

No answer.

I sat there contemplating his rudeness while casting furtive glances in his direction, trying to see what he looked like and what he was doing. He looked to be about eleven or twelve years old, with honey brown hair and chocolate colored almond-shaped eyes framed by long lashes the color of soot that made fans against his cheeks. He was dressed in cut-off blue jean shorts with a fringe at the bottom, and a striped Red Sox T-shirt hung loosely over his pants. After a few minutes of silent examination, I repeated my salutation and was finally dignified with a response. Eventually it became known that this boy, Sean, lived in Orleans all year, and held a peculiar distaste for us "summer people." Nevertheless, we quickly became friends.

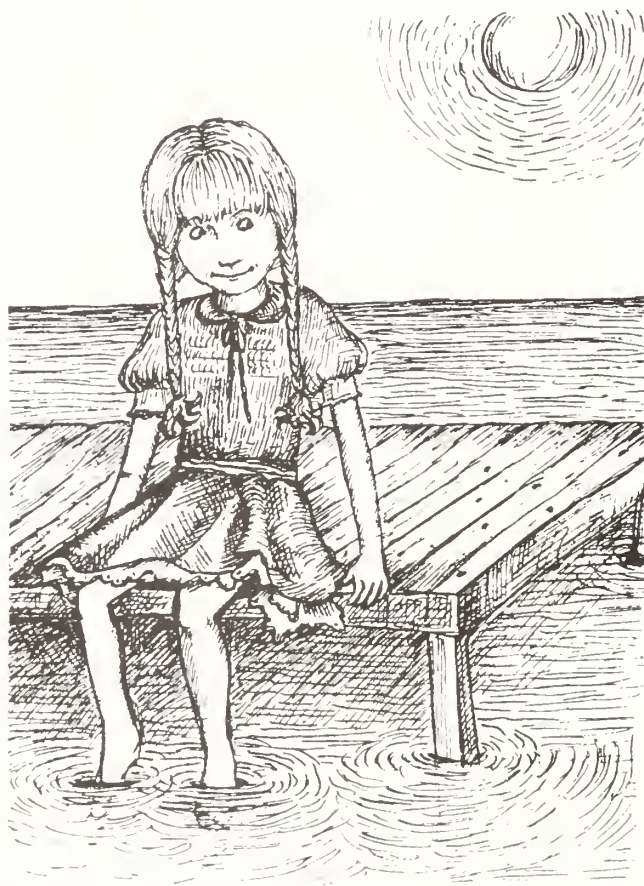
Sean and I did our best to entertain ourselves that summer despite the limited activities: we fished, played pirates down in the cove, caught frogs, and ate ice cream. Those days we spent together were really rather perfect. Every morning he would come to my house at 7 p.m., knock on the back door, and wait while I got my bathing suit, fishing pole, or any other commodity I would need for the day's adventure; every night we would return at 9 p.m., sunburned and exhausted. Sometimes my parents allowed him to stay over and we would sleep on the front porch in our sleeping bags, hoping to catch whatever little breeze there was wafting through the humid night air. While at the shopping mall, we encountered a store named Norton's where we bought each other multicolored friendship bracelets, which we vowed never to take off. We were mischievous and precocious: there was the time I cut his hair so short a wiffle was his only salvageable haircut; he pushed



me into the man-made waterfall at the miniature golf course; and we even left Orleans without proper notification to our parents on a bus headed to Nauset, the hotspot of Cape Cod. Whatever we did, wherever we went, we did it together, and as my sixty-one days quickly dwindled, I wished more than anything we could be friends forever.

Our last week was spent languishing in melancholy gloom: everyone was packing up to leave, with me along with them. Sean started to withdraw from me, resenting that I would leave him just like all his other friends once the summer was over. But I had no choice. There was a clambake on the beach the night before I left, and Sean and I decided to go together this one last time. I remember taking special pains with my dress that night, exchanging worn blue jeans and a T-shirt for a pretty sundress with blue and white flowers. I had finally washed the sand out of my hair, and left it hanging in long loose curls around my shoulders. Sean came to my house dressed in a striped shirt and navy blue tie, and had with him a package wrapped in white foil. We spent our last evening together in amicable friendship; after the Labor Day fireworks we shuffled back to the cottage and sat on the front step in companionable silence. Finally, when he could stay no longer, Sean stood up, offered a rough embrace, and disappeared into the night. The next day, on the journey home to Boston, I opened his package to discover a melted carton of peppermint-chip ice cream and a Red Sox T-shirt embedded with sweat and grime. I never saw Sean again after that summer, but his shirt still lies among my clothes as if it were only yesterday.

—Michelle Kelly, *I*



## SPAZIEREN GEHEN

Morning creeps too soon. Night is heaven. The steady gleaming lights of the skyline are a beacon to the life that is only \$0.85 away. The water in the reservoir is still and silent, rippling occasionally at a passerby. The moon makes morality and common sense obsolete. Nighttime: sin's playground. Tempting playmates tug at our clothing. Wild children run rampant. Ironically, we seek them for comfort. Ironically, they keep us sane. Evil makes us indifferent.

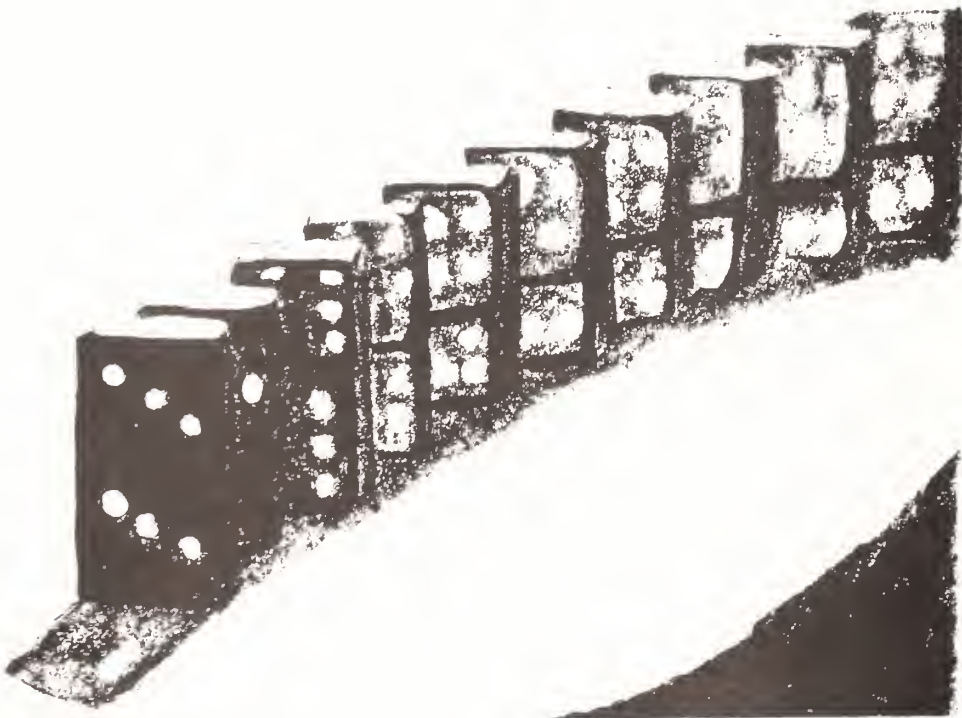
A bleeding man scattered on a boulevard; a child taunted by the ghosts in his psyche. We keep walking. Hunger feeds upon the starving. Death constantly seeks victims in order to keep himself alive. We keep walking. At this hour we're out struggling with the demons in our own heads and not noticing everyone else's. All are walking until the depressing arrival of the sun when they turn to stone, and we continue our gray lives once again.

—Manuel Argueta, III

## I'M READY

Somewhere in this mass of humanity  
Fragile as a house of cards  
Angry and sad  
Not my world  
Nowhere to go  
This was a test  
Stay far away  
Never, not ever  
Alone in the back  
Never belong  
Greatest achievement  
Something everlasting  
Hurts so much  
Where does the anger go?  
Sea of Humanity  
Won't hide you from me  
I see you  
Nothing I can do  
Powerless  
Lights go out  
Alone in the darkness  
Under control  
I'm ready.

—Anonymous, I



## THE CUP OF WISDOM

Do you remember, as well as I, that day I stood before you with sad, wide eyes? All I wanted was a refill on my cup of Innocence. You knew the road was long and my bag of Mistakes was heavy. I sat on the barstool, while Hope threw his arm around me and told me things would turn out okay. Guilt and Remorse sat in a booth in the corner, smoking long cigars and glancing at me with chiding eyes. Faith was my comrade, and she introduced me to her friend Trust. They were the only ones in whom I could believe. I told you repeatedly that I regretted the things that I'd done. You only half listened, and then explained to me that it was too late to be sorry—that I should have thought of those things while I was doing them. You'd read the Book of Life, and it had made you a cold, distant person, and I forgave you for that. Why couldn't you have forgiven me? I suppose you were afraid of Change, but if you were as wise as everyone thought you were, you would at least acknowledge Change's presence, knowing he could walk through that door at any minute. It was true, Change had visited me many times, but did that make me a bad person? I hadn't thought so.

I remember rising from that barstool and standing at the door to the Future, realizing that my Past was not something that could be resolved, and all I could do was laugh and cry, and say to you, "Thanks for the memories." You must have felt pity for me at that moment, because you wiped a tear from the corner of your weary eye, and approached me with something in your hand.

"It may not seem like much now," you said, "but I believe that it will serve you well." And you handed me a cup of Wisdom.

*--Colleen Madden, III*

## SHE IS ALONE

She is alone.

She sleeps  
in meager chambers,  
summer wind blowing  
over dreamless slumber.

She lies  
in fetal position  
from which she first escaped  
sixteen summers past.

She awakes,  
stumbles in the darkness,  
moving in silent preparation  
for nights of lonely company.

She looks  
into a shattered mirror,  
paints a tender face,  
covers stains of shame.

She walks  
under starless skies  
over city streets  
into wretched rooms.

She feels  
dull, insipid excitement.  
Pain has been forgotten.  
Survival is the goal.

She sees  
a familiar stranger's face.  
He offers cold embraces,  
gives her what he owes.

She is alone.

*—Rebecca Morrison, I*





## SUMMER SYMPHONY

The dull gray lake lies with a sheen of unease and gloom. It is a drum skin, taut with the anticipation of the cruel beats from the offending sky. It loses its glass fragility to an opaqueness which is a pretense of safety; perhaps the drumsticks will not cut it as deeply now.

For five minutes there is a gentle pitter-patter, falsely assuring that there will be no worse —no sharp jabs, no hard strokes. The beats acquire strength and a cadence resounds. The rhythm is intensified; the pattern becomes more complex; a suspense builds.

A cymbal crash explodes, changing the tempo. Rushed quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes now pound relentlessly, tearing into the carefully stretched fabric. Each beat rips the surface; each hit disrupts the cover. A frenzy seizes the drummers. The cymbals crash again and again, now accompanied by the reverberating kettle drums. Faster, faster, faster, until the tempo cannot increase, the cymbals' vibrations cannot end or begin, the drums are a rolling crescendo, the rumblings of the timpani are indistinguishable from one another, all held together for one long final measure.

Then there is a rest; the conductor puts down his baton, and the frogs applaud.

—Hilary Krieger, I

## SMILING, WE WATCHED TIME PASS BY

Many summers ago, we met.  
Holding hands, we walked the path,  
Now split in two directions.

Smiling, we watched time pass by  
And tried to forget that we'd soon say  
good-bye.  
Best friends were we, just you and me.  
It seems not long ago.  
Then again, where are you now?  
You can't just be lost in my childhood  
memories.

When my days with you reached their end,  
Memories of our friendship remained,  
Solidifying into a block  
Left to us to use as the foundation  
Of a bridge across space and time.

Let this be told, whatever may be,  
In this kingdom of my thoughts,  
As I think in yours,  
Sometimes I can still hear giggling voices,  
And picture us as children again,  
Doing as we did then,  
Smile, and watch time pass by.

—Shahreen Quazi, III



## RAIN

Rain falls as tears stream down my cheeks  
Wind screams as my fury shrieks inside  
Waves crash along the shore as my heart  
breaks again  
Storm rages as my head pounds in frenzy  
The wall is razed as my existence is  
eradicated

—*Kelly Gushue, II*

## SEA OF HOPE

Sea of hope  
Quagmire of desire  
Continuously struggling in quicksand  
Drowning in thoughts of you  
Hopelessly loving you

—*Kelly Gushue, II*

## THE SUBWAY MUSICIAN

The man, nestled snugly between a paranoid businessman and a crinkled old woman clutching at a flowered blue shawl, rocks rhythmically back and forth, strumming the worn black guitar strings and singing out of tune. He is older; a coarse, tangled beard grasping at his chin, his skin, rough and wrinkled, and his eyes a sad brown.

His song is low and sorrowful, like the cry of a lost child. I notice that in his green velvet-lined guitar case, just a handful of silver glints up at me.

I look at him and feel the smoothness of the coins in my pocket. I think of the drawer full of silver I have at home and wonder if he has a home, or if he wakes up to the biting cold to wander to the station and watch people avert their eyes so that they won't have to look at him.

He sits in black threadbare corduroys and a heavy black sweatshirt, and looks up at me, the sad brown of his eyes melting into the green of mine. For a minute, we are the same: just two people. But then the train pulls up and I break away and once again I am the girl with the home, the drawer full of change, the whole life ahead of her. And once again he is the old subway musician in worn black corduroys, rocking rhythmically back and forth and singing a low, sad song, out of tune.

—*Christina Tinglof, III*

## THE MAN WITH A STICK

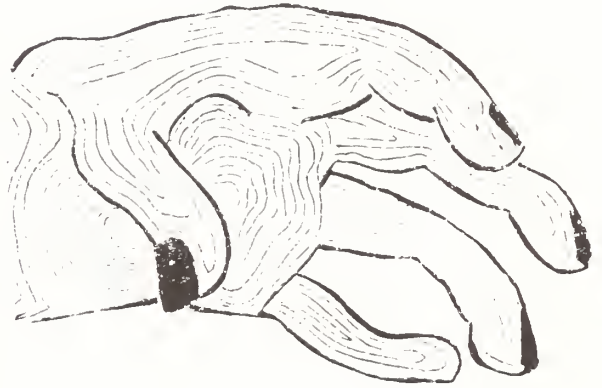
The stick was just like him: pale, knobby, gnarled, and rough. He clenched the stick in his fingers, bulbous with arthritis. This old man, I don't know who he was, came hobbling into the bus station with furtive eyes, looking for something to latch onto, other than his stick. He saw me, and hobbled over like some grotesque monster, his shuffle resembling Igor from Frankenstein. He sat down next to me and stared at me, his eyes drilling holes into my head. Yet, I did not dare look at him. Then, he said, "Look at me." But I couldn't. I could only look at his stick, its edges roughly sawed, and its shape twisted as if trying to grow straight, but the wind wouldn't allow it to, kind of like the old man's posture. "Look at me," he said, more forcefully this time. I turned my neck centimeter by centimeter until my eyes met his, and I cringed. "You think I'm ugly; don't you?" I could not deny it, but I could not state it either. His head was shaped like an upside-down triangle, rounded at the bottom for his chin. His teeth were yellow and twisted and they caused him to lisp. His lips were orange, and drool petered out of them constantly. His face was pocked and wrinkled and unnaturally wet, like a seal's skin. And his eyes had red rims, the whites were yellow, and the eye color was a milky brown. He was hideous. "You can't even look at me, can you? I'm repulsive and I scare you, don't I?" I could only stare. Then he whipped me on my fingers with the stick, that pale, ugly stick. It drew blood. I could not blame him, though; I was guilty. I could not look at him because he was ugly. Who knew what kind of person he was inside?

Before he left, he bent over, his foul breath polluting my breathing space. "You know the scary thing? I'm inside you. Every time you look in the mirror, you'll see me, because this is what you look like on the inside. I am the man in the mirror."

I could not look like that, could I? The man in the mirror could not live inside me. But before I could say this, the man was gone. The man and his hideous stick were gone.

All I could do was look at my blood and wonder. . .

—Meghna Samir Majmudar, II



## LIPTON TEA IN A DIXIE CUP

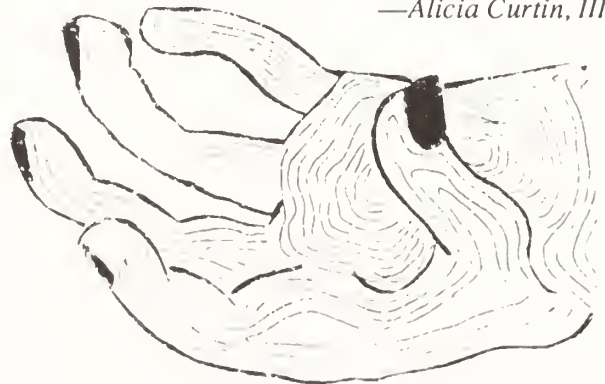
"But why can't I have it in a glass?" I would always ask.

"Because you're not old enough," she told me.

I watched her wrinkled hands pour her tea into a yellow tree-painted mug; then mine into a Dixie cup. I don't quite remember what she put in hers, but she always put milk and sugar in mine. Then I would sit with my Dixie cup and my spoon and watch cartoons in her soft, comfortable living room. We'd just sit and drink tea and watch cartoons; sometimes I'd color. She had a tin full of mismatched crayons and paper in her dresser.

I still drink tea now, but without milk and in a real glass. We buried my Nana in July. She leaves behind a loving husband, countless children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family, friends, and a used tea bag resting on a spoon next to a Dixie cup of tea.

—Alicia Curtin, III



## GLORY

As the raindrops pound continuously on their helmets, #37 stares into the concentrated eyes of #88. Scoffing him, he says, "Last play of the game, don't catch it and you'll remember it forever...and you'll have to watch us celebrate in your face..." "Blue 80, Blue 80, 42, 37, 88..." the quarterback yells in a hoarse voice, crouched behind the 300-pound center. "Hut, Hut...HIKE!"

Just as a gunshot sends sprinters into their bolting start, every player attacks, defends, or begins his pattern to the end zone. The offensive linemen had once been more still than dead bodies, with raindrops slowly dripping from the bars of their helmets, and puffs of their breath evaporating into the cold, misty air. Now, however, they pop into their stance, defending their all-important quarterback from the defensive linemen, backs, and all others who seek to kill him. #88 glances up at the lighted scoreboard through the fog: 17 HOME 10 VISITORS, whips his head back towards his foe, and takes off right at him as if he were his worst enemy. They are tangled for a couple of yards, then he breaks free, attempting to outrun the just-as-fast cornerback, who has taunted him for the length of the game.

"Wow, man, that's too bad you dropped that last pass, would've been a first down. Damn shame when good receivers are just dropping passes like that. That ball was in your hands, what happened?! Am I gettin' to ya yet? Intimidation baby, that's what it is."

He has had trash talked him before every play, but this is the last one. No dropping. No let down. No intimidation.

1...2...3...4...5...6...7. The quarterback takes his seven-step backdrop and plants his right foot in the rain-induced mud. Eyeing the field, his receivers are covered like syrup on pancakes, even his all-star wideout, #88. Step for step he is matched, unable to break from

the tight coverage. Too much time gone. :03...:02...:01, here comes the outside linebacker to the left. Wham! The fullback hits him dead on, like two tracks smashing each other, but the much larger defender sustains the collision in pursuit of the quarterback, leaving the fullback to settle into the mud grasping for a jersey. No time left. :00. Is it over yet? Nope. One last chance.

With a head full of steam, he charges at the quarterback. The quarterback steps up, rolling out of the pocket, avoiding the hit, and the oncoming pressure. Staring forty-three yards downfield and into the end zone, he searches for an opening. Flushing himself out to the right, he has no time. He steps up to the line of scrimmage as the pressure around him increases.

He can't shake him off. Where was his "no losing" motto? Where had it gone? He can't shake loose. #88 stops dead in his tracks, causing the agile cornerback to lose his balance and slip on the drenched, grassy field as he cuts back, bolting right for the end zone. Without hesitation, a spiral is released as the pressure collapses around him, sending the quarterback to the field to eat the grass as he feels a pain in his ribs.

The pass is true, straight, and "on the money." It sails forty-seven yards, ready to plant itself in the hands of the greatest receiver the school has ever known. He leaps with the assurance of adding to his record-setting touchdown reception total. As the ball falls into its decline, a man is in pursuit... and as #88 reaches out to pull it into his chest, he is smacked on the crossbar of his helmet by the elbow of a well-known defender, #37. The ball sails into his arms, as the "greatest receiver" thuds into the colorfully painted end zone, tasting it for the first time.

Well, he had to watch *them* celebrate in



Well, he had to watch *them* celebrate in his face. As he unsnapped his chin strap, spit out his mouth piece, and some blood at the same time, he whipped his helmet, stained by grass, the logo wearing away, into the tunnel of the locker room, as his other teammates walked dejectedly the same way. Their heads hung low and their hands barely gripping their helmets, they looked not one bit like the defending national champions, but more like a team who had never won a game. #88 stood there, watching his enemy get carried off the field tasting his moment as a hero, his glory. This was not about glory, or intimidation, or not letting down, or working hard, or being the best, or trying hard, or nothing...it was about losing.

*--Avi Spivack, II*



## VIOLATION

Engulfed by the translucency of tears  
Held insanity's hypnotic stare  
Awakened by a distant growl  
Of the woman walking with a roar  
Smells of torn earth  
Shuddering from her wounds  
Brought by the violation  
Of her trusted  
On her body  
Her hot blood bubbling up the cracks  
From her broken heart  
As she sings a lullaby  
Of forgotten comfort.

*—Gabriela Richard. III*

## BAZOOGIELAND

Up in New York State, past the Adirondacks, in the land where the Bazoogies reign, is my home. I do not live with the Bazoogies, but I belong there. Again, I say it is my home.

Behind the western end of our farmhouse there is a glade. Margaret's Glade, named after my aunt Margaret who found it. It was in Margaret's Glade that I met my first Bazoogie. If you sit and watch long enough you are bound to see them.

If you could see a Bazoogie, it would seem short and wiry and crammed with energy. Mostly, they possess dark and glossy hair and eyes. The only easy way to tell them apart is by their various art forms.

Their palace is in the sugarbush. Daily throughout the spring they slurp the sweet sap running in mazes through the trees; sometimes they leave enough for me. They are always building camps and towers and castles to move to restlessly the next day and begin anew. Their beautiful sculptures hang in the outstretched arms of maples dripping with new emeralds. The Bazoogie children hop and jump through their kingdom; nimbly leaping over the knotted roots and gasping for air under a wet blanket knit of last fall's leaves. They clamor to the tree tops and drink in the sweet air of the countryside. Their presence is most noticeable in the wee hours - morning or night - and they are rarely known to squint their faces in the harsh midday sun.

Bazoogies have square, stormy toes that grasp and hug the earth with each stride. They are beautifully dirty with earth. Everything about them is steeped in the wonderful rich reds and greens and browns of the earth. Bazoogies do not grow older, but better, as the pattern of the seasons rolls by. If you look for them they will stand almost still and grin a

wide laughing smile.

Bazoogies live collectively, but separately, sharing and recognizing boundaries at the same time. Bazoogies are silent. They do not speak. They do not waste time uttering thoughts into intelligible words. They feel. They create. Pure feelings need not be marred by words.

*--Allana Taranto, II*



## MONDAY

and then  
when none of them were looking  
he died.  
and all of a sudden  
they loved him  
but it was too late.

*—Liz Hauck, III*



## THE WALK

Down the road, she walks.  
Choppy, crusted snow covers  
passive automobiles.  
A virginal white  
blanket of death.  
Faceless bottoms  
of her black, ridged shoes tread  
down the snow-infested road.  
Lights gleaming from street lamps  
scorch her naiveté.  
An incandescent burning in the form of  
red, novel blisters.  
Externally, they are thin and fragile.  
A perfect bubble of stillness.  
Internally, they breathe fire.  
Abrupt puncturing  
with a fine silver pin induces  
pain.

Unnoticed, a tiny rock prods to the end.

Flitting, air-born snow  
teasing and dancing aimlessly  
narcissistically gnaws  
taut muscles set  
in the distorted, downcast visage.

Hushed, she delves deeper into submission,  
witnessing the frontal scraping of  
a vulnerable epidermis.  
A gleaming blade  
chisels and sharpens her into oblivion.

Pushed and struck to a solemn resignation.

A silent violent whirlpool stirs  
under placid waters  
forcefully chomping and sucking at what is  
left.  
To relish the last morsel.  
To savor the final juices of any remaining  
life.  
Ultimately, to take it all for itself.

Boxes are heavy.  
Strain is burdensome.

The leftover strength pushes her  
down the road  
of biting winds and scorching lights.  
She is raped. She continues her walk.

—Alia Aly, I





## SANITY'S GARDEN

Drinking a quart jar of my own venom,  
I am raised to a higher state of mental instability  
Where I am able to perceive what isn't always there in front of me.  
The flames rise as I listen to the hollow sounds for the wind.  
I am in perpetual isolation from the world.  
The darkness swelling within my mind has brought me here,  
A state of nothingness,  
Between a door to the outside and a door to the inside.  
The poison stings. . . the latch breaks and I step through.  
I lay down on the scorching sand;  
It chills my spine.  
Hypnotized, I look up endlessly.  
Blinding pain.  
I let the sun proceed with its assassination of the night.  
The trip is over.  
My physiognomy proclaims my whereabouts.  
They condemn me.  
I run to the edge,  
Suddenly realizing I am once again trapped  
In Sanity's garden.  
The rust-colored grass crunches under my feet.  
Barren trees loom like tortured gods overhead.  
Poison mushrooms grow  
On the distorted face of a gargoyle with broken wings.  
Here in Sanity's garden,  
Psyche lies rotting  
As society shuns and tries to starve its  
Unwelcome fellow neighbor. . . Rebellion.

—M. Argueta, III

## SCATTERED IN THE HEAVENS. . . NEVER LOST IN THE WIND

When the last thought has lingered in my mind,  
when the last ray and beauty of the day has entered and departed my soul  
the last time my being is surrounded by and reassured of your love,  
when I can no longer seek pleasure in watching your life joyously unfold,  
and when the finale of my life ends with the last echoing of my spirit, in the rhythm of my heart,  
and then and only then do I allow, permit, and grant you the right to shed a tear in my name.

Don't be ashamed to cry and don't be ashamed not to.  
What is natural is what encumbers you at the moment.  
Remember, I would want you to be your own person.  
So don't let another's principles intrude upon your mourning.

Although I'm scattered in the heavens, I'm never lost in the wind.  
I visit you in your dreams, whisper in your shadow, watch you from the clouds,  
and listen when you pray. I'm always there. You're never alone with your pain, for I hold you in my loving arms, dry your eyes and remind you to anticipate the potential of tomorrow.

You say I passed into a higher light,  
but remember, I never lived in darkness.  
It was love that dominated my character and drove my spirit.  
'Twas hope and aspiration that allowed me to awaken the vivid colors of yet another sunrise,  
and return to slumber, while the starry moonlit sky welcomed me, once again, to the wonders of my life, reenacted in my dreams.  
You were the sun bringing the brilliant colors,  
that initiated my purpose for the day.  
You were the moon that mirrored the sun's light, guaranteeing that no evil would invade my dreams.

Every life has a purpose.  
There is no plan for you,  
and it exceeds everything you thought your capabilities to be.  
You inspired my longevity.  
Now you are the bearer of the torch that shines with my mission.  
I have entrusted My Mission, My Most Prized Possession,  
within the very depths of your soul.  
I have faith, within your kind heart,  
its intention can never be tarnished.

Remember,  
because of your birth,  
you have the right to all the wonderment and goodness  
this green earth has to offer.  
So, expand your horizons and take advantage of opportunity.  
As long as Love is your foundation,  
the sky possesses.

*--Melissa McClinton, V*



## MADAME GOROVA

Madame Gorova glances knowingly around the crowded studio on Clarendon Street. This will be her last chance as a principal dancer at the Boston Ballet to show what she has learned. Following this season of *The Nutcracker*, she will retire from the profession that she loves.

As the music from the Overture begins to fill the room, Gorova examines the face of each child. She wonders if they will perform well together. She puts this thought aside and begins to call out numbers. Each dancer steps forward self-consciously, but in some, Gorova finds what she is looking for. In some, she sees the magic coming alive with the vast rainbow of interpretation, style, and talent, determination, and pride. In some, she sees *The Nutcracker*.

Number 13 steps to the line and carefully places her feet in the fifth position. The music ends while her arms, positioned across the center of her body, tremble slightly. When the music resumes, Gorova calls out the steps. Number 13 is transformed from a nervous young ballerina to an excited yet graceful Clara. Her arms flow easily through the thick, tense air and her strong legs carry her across the unyielding wood floor. Her face is hard and merciless, consumed by concentration, but as she lands her jeté at the other side of the room, her smile is enchanting. The others gasp as she finishes. Their sweaty palms becoming small rivers, they look around questioningly. How can she do that? How did she perform so well? Gorova doesn't allow her expression to change. She nods to the pianist and the *March* begins. One of the few male dancers, Number 22, straightens his back as he awaits instructions. His black slippered feet disappear as he turns into his first pirouette. He then proceeds to leap almost effortlessly while his slightly arched back and muscular arms provide a mystical vivacity.

He focuses on Gorova, but she says nothing more. He walks away disappointed, but Gorova knows. Minutes later he is cast to dance the main part of Fritz.

Gorova is happy that she has found dancers for the main role so quickly, but she isn't yet satisfied. The mice, the soldiers, and the party girls and boys still remain. The mice will be difficult to find since they must all be fairly small and about the same size. Each dancer begins in the same manner, placing her feet in the fifth position. Each is asked to perform the same movements, but only ten will remain for the first rehearsal. Gorova studies Number 16 as she does small leaps across the entire length of the room. Her arms suggest panic, as in the battle with the soldiers, but her darting eyes have a glint of ferocity. Number 27 follows, sure to point his toes for each leap. His final leap, somewhat longer than his others, resembles a flaming arrow flying through the air. He burns with perspiration as he lifts his tired arms to take a slight bow.

The taller dancers begin to enter the studio as the dynamic music, representing the battle of the mice and the soldiers, continues. Realizing that time is growing short, Gorova begins her selection of the soldiers right away. Once again, each dancer does the same routine, with Number 5 going first. He begins with an arabesque, straining to balance on his left leg. He grimaces as he places his elevated right leg on the ground and whips it into a deep plié. His long fingers stretch toward the cracking white ceiling while he prepares to jump. Barely touching the line, Number 19 starts to perform. With her bun tightly held on her head and her pale pink leotard clinging to her slender shoulders, her leaps are agile, elegant and well-rehearsed. Her posture is flawless and her arms dramatic yet powerful.

Watching the sun beginning to set, Gorova grows nervous. She studies every movement, every expression as the dancers perform. Number 31, no more than five years old, does each jump and turn precisely. As her brunette curls bounce, she is sure to smile, fulfilling her role as a party girl. She bows upon reaching the black wooden barre at the opposite end of the studio. A few dancers later, Number 14 grins nervously as he looks at Gorova. His grin melts to intensity as he does a jeté, landing solidly on his left foot. His serious expression remains while he spins rapidly into a pirouette.

With the clock nearing 7, Gorova has finally finished. She imagines the weeks of rehearsals that lie ahead as she thanks the pianist and lifts up her worn black bag. Will they perform well together? Will the magic come to life?

Weeks later, Madame Gorova glances knowingly around the crowded Wang Center. All have learned their parts. Everyone now knows exactly what to do. She watches as the curtain opens. Many in the audience have seen *The Nutcracker* before. But never have they been so amazed, so impressed, so mystified. The magic of the vast rainbow has come to life.

— Angela Bayer, II





## MY GOD

(by Alexander Galich, Russian poet)

I went searching for God  
It was already light in the valley  
What I needed was not a lot  
Just a couple of scoops of clay.

I descended into the valley  
And I made a fire by the stream  
And the red, sticky clay  
In my hands I crushed and squeezed.

What did I know of God  
At that early stage of being,  
For whom hands and feet I formed  
And for whom a head I made?

When it finally dimmed out, that day  
So long, full of hopes and worries  
My god, made out of clay  
Said to me:  
    Go and murder!

And years passed  
    And again  
The same, only so much firmer  
My god, made out of a saying  
Kept telling me:  
    Go and murder!

And I went by the way of dust  
My dress was picked by thorns  
And the god, made out of horror  
Whispered:  
    Go and murder!

And again, so sadly and sternly  
I come in the morn to a hold  
Setting out to look for a kinder God  
And oh, so help me God!

## THE BLUE BALLOON

(by Bulet Okudgaua, Russian poet)

A girl is crying  
Her balloon flew away.  
She is being comforted  
While the balloon floats

A maid is crying  
She is not loved  
She is being comforted  
While the balloon floats

A woman is crying  
Her husband loves someone else  
She is being comforted  
While the balloon floats

An old woman is crying  
She did not live long enough  
And the balloon has returned  
It is light blue

*--Translations by Kate Fruman, IV*

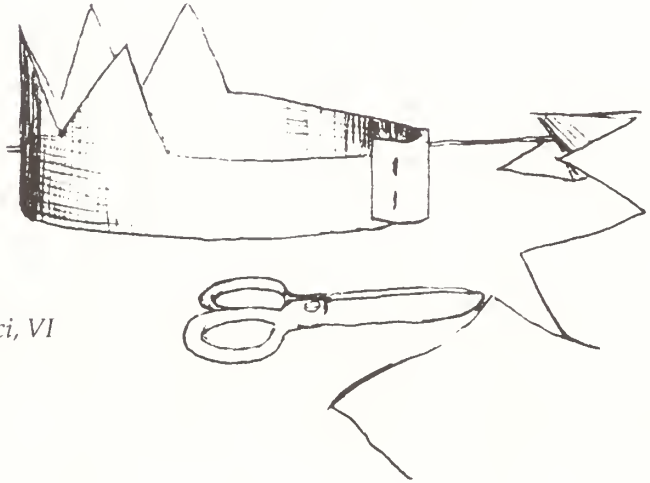


## PRETENDING

When I was a little girl  
I was a queen and a dancer and even President  
And *She* was too —we were the world together.

But somehow *She* faded away  
And now I have no time for silly games.  
My crown  
Was only yellow paper  
anyway.

—Allyson Vinci, VI



## STREET BABY

There she lay  
Embraced by her blanket of stars  
Nestled on her newspaper pillow  
Lulled by the lullaby of forever shuffling  
feet  
In her cardboard cradle.

—Christina Tinglof, III

## INTERVIEW OF A DYING GOD

The reporter walked down the hallways of the ancient space station, he could see it had been battered by the last attack very badly, even though its Langston Field held. The strafing by the laser and particle beam cannon had been so severe that the Field hadn't cooled completely and was still radiating energy into space.

When the interview started the reporter hadn't even the chance to ask a question before the ancient man behind the desk began his speech.

"I am a god. No! No, not a god, the god! All of them have been made by me, even you! I've been doing it for three millennia. What's left of the universe is my doing. I am the god that created everyone!! I am all powerful! Without me there would be nothing, not you, not anything!!"

The old man in the chair started hacking and coughing; he looked as he would fall apart at any moment.

"Give me a second, I need a drink."

He continued, "I am Sir, DR., Esquire, Myself Keepongoing, Junior, CCVIII, President of the Offspringcorpo inc. ltd.

"What business am I in?"

"I call it Generational Reprocessing. But, it is cloning. Yes, it is the business of populating the universe. What? Speak up! Speak up! How did it start?"

"Well, right after GW3 (Galaxy War Three), there was a drought, if you will, of sentient beings in the universe. I came up with the Incarnation Formula.

"Clones were in use at the time but nothing with a backbone would come 'alive' when the clone was made.

"When someone said 'Try to do a backbone,' what came up resembled lasagna. And how can you do anything useful, like exterminate an offensive race, with a fistful of worms?"

"Well, I came up with the 'Incarnation Formula.' I had heard of 'reincarnation' from a Hindu soldier pal of mine (who is probably a tree on infamous Sol-3 now) so I thought 'Would it be singular if I took off the prefix?' No one said anything at the time because all the grammarians had been caught on their annual seminar at MarsBase6 at the outbreak of the war and had been shot to rags when the revolution began. All of the English and grammar teachers that weren't blown to smithereens at the conference were forced to enlist in one army or another and corrected their uneducated comrades-in-arms one too many times. A total of sixteen thousand enlisted intelligentsia were hanged for annoying their comrades to the point of insanity.

"For a few years I was ignored by everyone because they had no use of population; they had a hard enough time taking care of themselves. But after all the puny kingdoms were formed, they started squabbling with each other. But how could they fight without armies? Suddenly the much larger and invading Kalaak army found itself facing a magnitude of warriors stretching into the horizon, the sun gleam-

ing off of mighty battle machines.

"Thanks to me.

"Business boomed, needless to say, but I'll say it anyway, and there are plenty of people to slaughter each other now. I control it all because I am, now, the only advanced life form that was not created by my corporation. I changed a bit of what I learned in health class so there was no choice but to come to me when you needed people. A few centuries ago some pitiful fools started a rebellion, but whattaya gonna do against genetically enhanced, mass produced warriors, without any morals (except loyalty and obedience to me!), and armed with the most advanced weapons in the galaxy?"

"The entire galaxy is my playground, I create the vast armadas that destroy and send their enemies burning into space to die. I play with them as a boy with toy armies, sending soldiers to be ambushed on the bedroom floor, machine gunned, and destroyed, by their plastic enemies that the boy happens to favor as his countrymen at that time. I happen to be that boy, and billions beg for my favor so they won't be vaporized when the enemy come to their planet, hoping to reduce it to glowing radioactive slag.

"It isn't like it matters to me what happens to them, the plebeian slime; I just enjoy hearing their pathetic begging. The passions of war, death, life, love and hate, it's all a game for me and I control the dice. What fun!"

He became deadly grim, "But the corporation has become too big. I can't keep it together, it's the cyberneticists' fault, I tell you!!" he was becoming hysterical.

"They are taking the thing I have worked towards the entire three thousand years of my life! They are stealing my child, my baby from me! They are...," he sobbed, putting his head in his hands.

The old man slumped over in his seat, and his breathing became labored. A team of doctors rushed into the room and an eight-foot guard led me from the room, "The boss has refused rejuvenation, he ain't got much time left," he said, tears brimming around his eyes.

I left the space station with a great sense of waste.

A great empire was falling.

A god was dying.

—Conor Sullivan, V

## LIFE'S A BEACH

"Hey, Guys! C'mon, I wanna be out of here by 10 o'clock. We've gotta beat the traffic," my mother whines as she walks into the house to retrieve the cooler, and umbrella and the towels.

I look towards Gabe and responsibly question, "Do you have all your things?"

"Of course I do you geek," he coolly responds, continuing his adventures in the world of Gameboy.

"How about your bathing suit?" I hear the Gameboy power switch click off and see Gabe sprinting toward the house. I pet Cocoa and as always she pants for a bone. "Later you little doggie you."

Adam, my 3-year-old baby brother, involved in his own world, plays contentedly with his action figures on the ground. I pick up him and his toys and carry him to his seat in the back of the car. "There you go buddy. Play all you want."

Unfortunately, I do not notice the Luke Skywalker figure, lying on his side alone on the ground. He is without his cronies Princess Lea and Han Solo, whom I remembered to pick up for Adam, and who happily lie in Adam's hands. I don't see Adam pointing to the lonely, forgotten Jedi Knight outside the car and walk inside to bring out my bag, sandals and radio.

"Are tuna sandwiches all right?" my mom hollers as I pass the kitchen.

"Sure," I yell back already on my way upstairs.

My mom then shouts back something that I can't understand and I return a deafening "What?"

I hear her ascending the front stairs, "Don't forget to bring Cocoa back inside, you know she wanders off," my mom commands, as she reaches the second floor.

Then there is the scream.

We all know who it is. All of us inside, Adam outside.

I bolt down the stairs, leap across the hall-

way, skid right and burst through the back door, terrified, my terrible imagination racing. Adam isn't in the car. Adam isn't sitting outside the car. Luke Skywalker is still outside the car door lying on his side. My qualms rapidly grow and I look down the gravel driveway; Adam is crouched in a ball at the street. The horror of the scene gores my heart. Surrounded by half a dozen snarling dogs, Adam is helpless. They relentlessly shake him by the legs, my 3-year-old brother gripped at the throat by Satan's hands. A fragile angel among gnashing, growling, merciless monsters, who taunt him with hellish glares, scarlet tongues and stained teeth. These disciples of Cerberus continue to tear at his legs in a frenzy, sinking soiled fangs into his pure, soft skin, unmoved by his high-pitched screams of torment and pain.

"Aaaaaadddaaaaammmmmmm!!!!!!!" I reassure him as I dash down the driveway. Tears of anger and hatred and malice fill my eyes but do not stop me. Cursing the dogs, my deep-felt emotions take control of me as I punish the bold, remaining monsters with numerous damaging kicks to their diabolical, red faces and bodies.

I pick Adam up, squeezing him, embracing him, letting him know that it's over. I feel his brave heart beating in his little chest against mine. "You're okay, you're okay, you're okay, you're okay," I tell him as tears merge on my chest, yet his calves spill rivers of blood over my shirt and shorts. "Why, why? Why not me?" I shout towards the closed gates of Heaven. "You're okay, you're okay, you're okay, you're okay," I whisper, wiping my sticky right hand on my shirt. And all the while Luke Skywalker, long forgotten, reaches out for someone — and finds no one.

*—Ben Cohen-Leadholm, II*



## TIES OF DUST

If you were to take your car and drive up into northern Maine, you might happen upon an unpaved road that twists and turns down, through, up and around the countless little hills of the area. If you endured the painful bumps and soul-jarring potholes, you would soon be rewarded by the sweetly welcoming sight of my family's little shack in the woods, smiling its lopsided smile at you and letting you know how glad it is that you have come. The glass eyes are somewhat grimy, the wooden mouth is missing a few teeth where the cinder block steps were stolen, and the house's entire body leans at a tired angle, but somehow the place comes out looking beautiful.

We used to always arrive after dark, having hurriedly left after school, so we would stumble in the door blindly and collapse into bed in the cold shadows. The next morning when I woke up to see the dust-covered sunshine hanging in the air, I would smile to be where I was and go downstairs to help my mother in the exciting adventure of cooking on our cast iron wood stove. The kitchen, like the attic where I slept, was criss-crossed by beams of sunlight that striped the floor and walls and air in between with soft lines of light and shadow, as if someone had draped a loosely tied net of swirling dust over the room.

The house was definitely no luxurious hideaway. Our heat came from two hard-working wood stoves, one of which also did the cooking; our light came from assorted lanterns and candles; and our only running water was the stream located down the hill behind the house. Even though you had to go through a little trouble to get some light to read by or a fire to dry out your socks, I think it did more to improve our lives than it did to make them harder. The difficulty of getting reading light was overcome by conversation,

and the coldness of the house in the winter led us outside to the snowy cross-country trails and the stinging sharp cold and light that mixed to make the clearest views of the year. Then when the summer came along and we didn't need these artificial helps anymore, the evening crickets and green mountains were impossible to resist, and the lonely house was often left to itself for the greater part of the day.

Not that there weren't days when we stayed home; there were plenty. When I was younger, I didn't often want to go on long hikes in the woods; playing in the yard and down by the stream was much more my style. To my short legs and young eyes, plenty of adventure could be found close to home. Our yard was a very natural one, really more of a field. We weren't there very often, so mowing the grass was so futile that we pretty much gave up and let the wild things take over; it was probably one of our beneficial defeats. The yard was filled with wild strawberries, wild flowers, wild and beautiful everything, and it made a wonderful place to spend my summer afternoons. It wasn't the type of yard where you could lie around and watch the clouds because the bugs were energetic and didn't give you much time before they attacked, but it was the perfect place to pick flowers for my mother and find strawberries to put in the pancakes.

In the end of the yard furthest from the road stood three pine trees. When I last checked, the smallest had just reached six feet tall and the largest stood a foot or so taller than that. The first time I remember seeing them, the smallest reached a little above my knees. As kids of about four, eight, and nine years of age, my older brothers and I could not resist this perfect little stand of trees, and we named them after ourselves: Andy, Tommy, and Kate. I think those trees must have been watching us



carefully over the years, because in the year when I was twelve, Tom, the middle tree, suddenly shot up to be taller than its older neighbor, just as the original Tom had just done to Andy. That was one among many things that always made me feel like Maine was sort of watching over me, keeping an eye out: the trees in the yard, the face I always saw on the front of the house, and the stream.

The stream is reached via a twisting path, steep at times, that I always used to sing on when I was alone, to keep the bears away. About halfway down the path the stream would start talking back, whispering sweet nothings in my ears and cheerfully telling me about her day. She was always more persistent than some water ways, seeming almost to grow louder if I was thinking too hard and ignoring her, pushing her childish voice up and up until I would have to turn around and give her the attention she demanded and deserved.

When I woke in the morning, the stream was always the first place I visited. On warmer days I would step off the rocks into the pool at the base of the miniature waterfall, slowly advancing into the blood-slowing cold until my courage was up and I threw my entire body forward into the awakening chill, rising to find the sunniest rock, like the small green lizards who lay toasting in the sun with nothing more to do than be warm and happy. In cooler weather, when the water wasn't quite so inviting, I would sit on the rocks on the banks of the stream and watch all the wonderful things that went on. In the still pools made by small outcroppings of land or rocks, the water bugs would dance for me on their liquid ballroom floor, skimming and gliding to the steel-drum-like sounds of the rolling water. Tired of sitting, I would leap onto a starting-rock in the middle of the water and take off

down the stream, leaping from rock to rock in crooked lines down the liquid path to see how far I could get without getting my feet wet, all the while accompanied by the wavering reflections of the leaves in the trees above me.

The coldest months transform the stream into a still jumble of all the shades of white and gray you could possibly imagine. As cold as it was, I still tried to visit her often, just to make sure she was surviving the winter well. The walk down the hill was always quieter then, as if the water were afraid to wake the sleeping ground. Preceding the moving water was a still pool, frozen over, the color of the surface shifting from pale gray in the most stagnant corner to a slippery black where the water beneath picked up speed as it glided towards its larger and quicker relative. As I walked around the final turn and came to the bank I could hear the faint chatter of my friend, managing to retain a small part of her motion and voice beneath the descending ice. The ice would form in swirling, winding shapes of white, suspended a few inches above the water, flowing slowly. Beneath this frozen canopy sound was multiplied tenfold, and the echoing burble reached its ten thousand arms of noise up over the banks and into my skin, winding its way in to settle around my bones in company with the cold.

When you're that far north in the winter, dark comes early, and the house was our warmth and protection from the elements on countless nights. The five of us would gather around a single lantern at the tiny metal table that served as a dining, card-playing, general use table all in one, and we'd talk of things important or funny, and listen to the weather. In the winter that wasn't a big deal since the snow usually fell peacefully and silently, but the summers and spring were filled with some of the most violent thunder storms I've ever seen in the east. I spent many suspenseful

nights lying on my cot in the loft as the wind whipped the house into an orchestra of creaking, wondering how much such an old and ramshackle house could possibly take. I was a frequent reader, and the poems and stories warning arrogant man that nature was one hell of a woman who could crush him easily any time she pleased were common.

The house is a little sturdier now, and storms are no longer quite so eventful. We've put on a new wood siding, added a screen porch, and even fixed the foundation so the face I see on the front of the house no longer has such a lopsided grin.

Strangely, now that the house is more comfortable, and easier to travel to (fewer kids at home and a more reliable car), we haven't been up there in years. My oldest brother has gone with friends a few times, and my parents have escaped for the occasional weekend, but it has been years since we've been there together. My parents have constantly encouraged independence in us, and I think their encouragement was enough to make it happen. Andy is now walking a trail from Georgia to Maine by himself; Tom will join the Peace Corps next year to teach English and math on a small island in Central America; my summers are spent biking or hiking all over the country; my mom is finally able to devote herself to her art; and my father to his interns and his book. Our focus has turned outward. It seems sad sometimes that my mother has gone a year without seeing her eldest son, yet we are still a close family. I can feel it in the times when we are all home together, or in the times when I realize how close we must be to survive all those miles.

The house in Maine was a physical reminder that we were a family, but it's a reminder we don't need so often anymore. No matter how old we get, however, we still do need that reassurance. This summer I'll be there with my mother, just so we both know

that independence doesn't always mean leaving, and that leaving doesn't have to mean never coming back.

— *Kate Berg, 1*





## A SPARTAN WIFE'S LAMENT

I do not know how to deal with his shame, his realization that he cannot fight, he cannot kill.

Days before, he left, strong and robust, his youth and inexperience allowing him to feel an inflated sense of confidence in his abilities as a warrior. I waved good-bye with the other wives and spoke proudly to them of my husband's superior fighting ability. I know that I was only masking my fear of his being killed, my future aloneness. But it was somehow fun to boast about him with his perfect face and huge muscles. There are no qualities inside of me which I love so much as those that he seemed to possess so easily.

And now, he returns to me, his head bowed, and I hold him, because I do not know what else to do. I should tell him that his

feelings are normal - maybe they are somewhere- but I know that they are not. Not here. Spartan men love blood; weapons excite them. War is their life. But he looks so pathetic, and is so full of apologies, that I cannot scream at him (as I'd like to) for destroying my fantasy of the fearless man who would protect me. And what am I to tell the other women when they laugh and stare, nursing the helmets of their dead husbands? Their husbands who died only after proving their worth and saving Sparta?

I do not love my husband as a person, only as a soldier. I only wish he had died in battle, instead of returning to me so afraid, so effeminate. But he is my husband. I will pretend.

*--Ann McCarthy, 1*



## MEMOIRS OF THE DAMNED...A VAMPIRE REFLECTS

My Son,

Even though I have lost the concept of time, I know that it has been ages since we last spoke. You must be a fully grown adult by now, since it's been over thirty years since I last saw you. Since you have come of age, I feel that it is time for you to know the Beast that your father has become.

It is true that I remember almost nothing of my mortal life, except for those memories of you and your beautiful mother. Even though the most powerful memories of my life have waned sufficiently, one memory stands out in my mind as crystal clear as if it were yesterday: the day I became a Vampire.

My son, do you remember our trip to the Transylvanian Alps? As I recall, you were only about nineteen years old at the time. That night, while I was off gathering firewood for us to cook with, I was attracted to a small clump of bushes that seemed to have been trampled by some sort of wild animal. I followed the trail of trampled bush, and, to my surprise, I found a man, sprawled out on the ground, curled into a fetal position. Noticing his pallid complexion, I swiftly hoisted him onto my shoulders, and **started** back towards camp. About a half a mile away from our camp site, I stopped to rest, and to see how my patient was doing. He was unconscious, so I checked his vital signs; and to my disappointment, he had none. I turned around, thinking over this poor man's death, when I was startled by a light chuckling behind me.

As I turned around, a force like a tidal wave smashed into my face. As I was laid low by a second blow to the stomach, I tried to flee but resistance was futile. As my perception faded, all that was visible to me were two long, white fangs. His teeth pierced my throat at the jugular, and he slowly began to drink my blood. When he had finished, he dropped me to the cold ground. He left me to die.

Then the change began. How to describe it? I

was overwhelmed by confusion, heat, and pain. My mouth felt as if it was on fire. My teeth formed fangs. My face throbbed. Such living agony cannot be described by my feeble vocabulary. I had become a monster.

Shortly after, I divorced your mother. Understand that none of this is your fault. I left because I feared that one day you and your mother would have died to feed my hunger for blood.

Now that you know my story, I will reveal to you some of the secrets of my race. The Vampire is a creature of the night. A hunter. A survivor. Even though we are blessed with immortality, we are cursed with the burdens that come with it. It is true that we are ageless in our undeath, and we can only be destroyed by the forces of life: sunlight and flame.

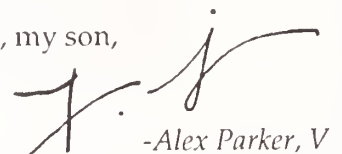
Vampires are also creatures of madness and warp. Through the centuries, madness always squats on the shoulder of the vampire, waiting for the best chance to invade his mind and make him insane.

The reason for widespread insanity among Vampires is most likely something we call the Beast. The Beast is something that all Vampires dread, because it is the incarnation of what we really are: heartless, ruthless predators.

The Vampire's urge for blood runs deep. Blood is the source of our unlife, the coal that fuels our immortality. The Bloodlust, which we call the Hunger, is an urge so strong that it can't be compared to any need of Mortal life. The Hunger blots out all other needs. The need to eat, to sleep, or the need to love, are all replaced by the Hunger. To deny the Hunger enrages the Beast, and takes us one step closer to frenzy and madness. This is why I left you and your mother behind.

These will be the last words anyone will hear from me. I can no longer live with the madness, and I have decided to die the Final Death.

Farewell, my son,



-Alex Parker, V



## THE UPRISING

I struggled to show my true face, to reach at least the steps of the stage of life. But there was a ring around me, a ring of faces and bodies with evil thoughts in evil minds. They watched as I stood helpless, mouth gaped open, trying to breathe fresh air, not the fatal stinking breath of their uttered words. I clamped my hands over my ears and looked frantically about. The circle tightened while they cried and screamed words at me that I tried not to understand. The words seeped slowly, silently into my brain causing confusion. Anger boiled inside of me, but I made myself silent, passive. I hoped a day would come when I could release those evils I kept locked up inside a smiling, gentle facade.

Then doomsday came, the uprising. I joined in to help shatter windows and beat fellow human beings, ineffectively trying to break and loosen the silent aggression and pain within me. I rejoiced in the hatred I could feel for other people, the ignorance that I and so many others had used. I wanted to struggle to show the damage done to me and the damage I could do. I was as fatal as their words. I could be full of hatred too. I could beat down my fellow human beings just as I had been beaten down. Can this be good, should I be proud?!

No punishment could hurt me as much as I had already been hurt. Lady Justice could inflict no pain on me. A cold gray cell was the same as the "prison in my mind."

The hurt, the pain made me feel helpless, like a chick unhatched. But then I became some of the heat of a red poker willing to burn anyone. It was a power rush, a high I had never felt before. I had a sense of security I never had before. Was it false?

Ironic, isn't it, how something so criminal could be justified? But it must be. Why else would I do wrong if I hadn't been wronged? Why else would I be so angry if I hadn't been beaten down? Some say there is no excuse, for me there is.

After the uprising I settled down to watch the tapes of men being replayed over and over. I heard robot voices from news reporters telling stories they knew nothing about. I saw talk shows interviewing "rioters" and "innocent bystanders," making it all seem like the movie of the week.

It makes me wonder why I must be beaten down. Why must they pretend by saying, "Why can't we all just get along?"

*-Amanda M. Matos-González, IV*

## VIRTRUE

The Virtrue screen flashed the word "INOPERATIVE."

"Dammit!" Rich said as he clambered behind the wall. His five-year-old son, Daniel, watched patiently and quietly except for the occasional snigger at his daddy's cursing.

The Virtrue screen was broken again, and the MAR, Maintenance Assigned Robot, was not free until six o'clock. The cyberball championship was on tonight and Rich had invited several of his friends from the IA (Internet Anonymous) to come and watch.

"Daddy, can I go and play?" Daniel squealed through the wall. Daniel picked up the vector ball lying on the carpeted floor, and turned it on. It hovered for several seconds as it logged on, gyrating side to side and then up and down.

"Yes, just don't annoy Thomas again." Daniel thanked his daddy and ran off to the E16 JCC to play infrared hide and go seek, and to bother Thomas, the retarded child next door.

Rich almost had the Virtrue screen fixed. It was a complicated and big system, about ten feet tall and eleven feet wide with dozens of optic fibers to deal with. Rich was checking all 200 channels that would be on line so that he would not have to reset the entire machine if something went wrong with one channel. He pressed the automatic check pad, but it responded with a vocal "Inoperative!" He opened the manual check pad and slipped his hand into the hand mold. He started flipping through the channels, one by one, the LCD display lighting up like the Christmas tree lights Rich had seen as a child. As he approached channel 200, the all-day-scenery channel, he loosened his hold on the pad. He tried to pull his hand away at 200, but found that the wrist strap was too tight to pull out of. As he undid the strap he noticed something strange: the channels kept on going, each new one interfacing with the screen and programming itself in. Rich stood in amazement as the channels racked up by the dozen, and finally stood at channel

324.

Rich took his hand off the sweaty manual pad and moved around to the front of the screen. The Virtrue Glove was on the couch, so Rich just flipped through the channels on the console. He went through all the channels up to 200, and then paused for a second. He tuned onto channel 201. Before him was a man in an Army uniform, giving news about the war for control of northern Lunar2, the last section of the moon not to be controlled by the US. As he flipped through more and more channels, he saw different views of the battlefields on northern Lunar2, showing casualties and damage estimates on the bottom right hand corners. Rich had stumbled upon secret government channels.

Rich was now at channel 323 when he heard a rhythmic thumping coming down the hall. The whirring sound of doors opening all down the hall worried Rich. As he made his way to his door, he looked up at the door monitor. He could see five RECONs, special government enforcers, running down the hall, their steps coordinated with each other. They were armed with degenerizers and molecular scramblers, and were coming towards his door.

Rich turned and ran to his bedroom, looking frantically for his great grandfather's still operative Colt .45 magnum, a family heirloom, the only family heirloom. He heard the front door blast open and several voices after the initial blast. He opened his bottom bureau drawer and detracted the Colt, spinning the barrel once. He slid back into the far corner of the room, aiming the barrel at the door. He had six shots, there were five of them. He had one miss.

The first RECON slowly approached the door, waving his molecular scrambler to intimidate his foe. As his body entered the doorway, Rich cocked the gun and fired. The RECON clutched his open stomach and fell backwards into the hall, gulping for air. There was a serious commotion

going on in the hall, and Rich could tell that they were planning something. Rich felt his stomach turn.

Two RECONs appeared at the door, both brandishing degenerizers. Rich picked one of them off immediately, but the other fired. A photon hit the wall and a gaping hole appeared. Rich fired twice, hitting the RECON in its face. There were two left.

The RECONs both came at Rich once again, this time lower to the ground than before. Rich fired once high, and then once low, hitting one. He had no bullets left. The last RECON fired his molecular scrambler. Rich instinctively covered his head and waited for death.

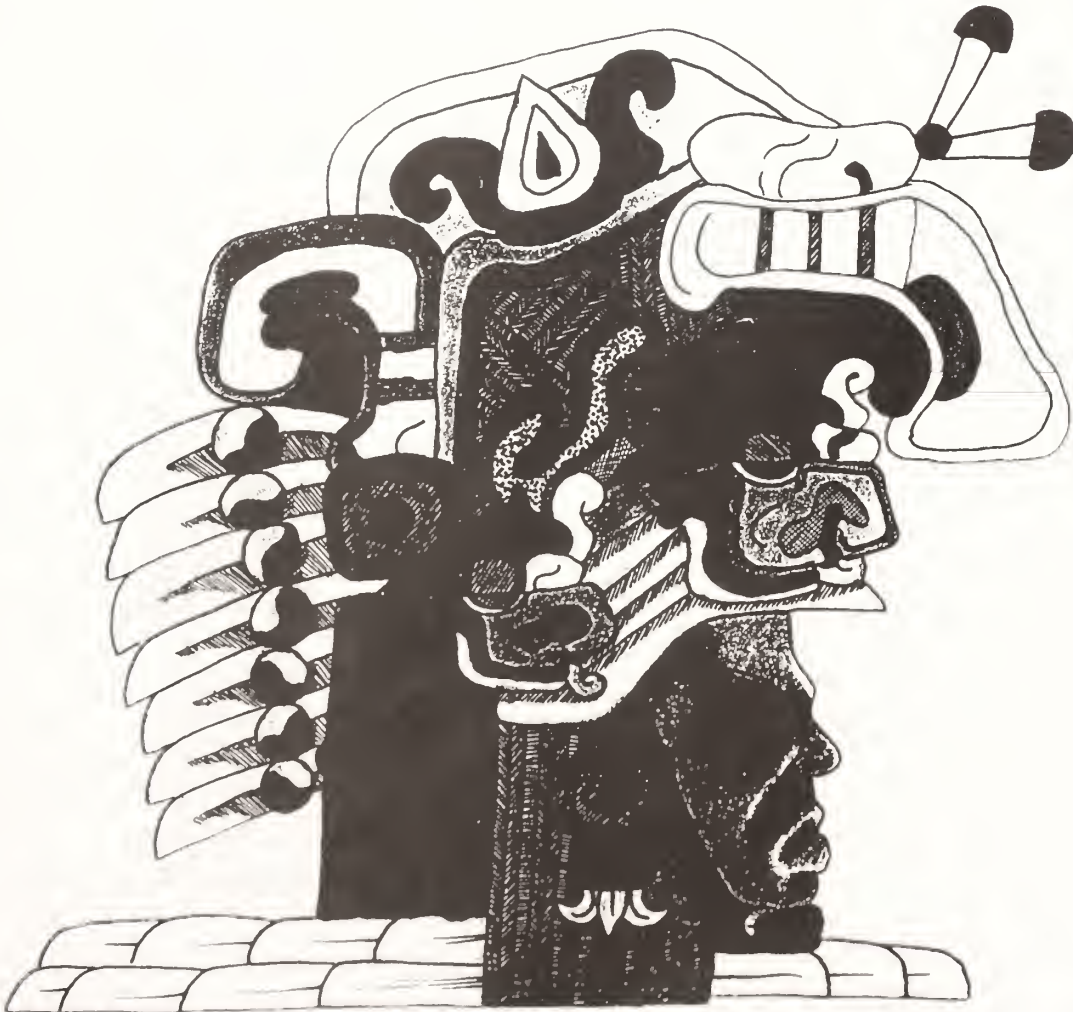
Death came slowly and painfully. The

bonds that held Rich's molecules were separated, his existence turning into a gaseous state that whipped around for a few seconds before it reached planetary escape velocity. His molecules went flying into oblivion.

The RECON de-ionized his molecular scrambler and went to finish the job of dismantling the Virtrue screen. After he finished, he called the maintenance to have the bodies taken directly to the municipal crematorium.

As the final RECON left the building, he noticed a young boy entering the building with a gash on his elbow, his vector ball in tow. As the little boy passed, the RECON patted the young boy on the head reassuringly.

*—Eben Burnham-Synder, II*





## STRANGER

A tiny silhouette appears on the horizon. The gusty winds shoot down the long school hallway, the papers fly, dust jumps about, the showdown begins. At the same pace, we approach one another, merely strangers now.

The palpable stench from the Boy's Bathroom envelops me as I pass it but it doesn't slow me down. The smell of the encounter, the smell of curiosity, the smell of the foreboding showdown, are much more of a priority to me.

Features become more discernible: the pigeon-toed, "cool" walk, an occasional stumble; the baggy dark jeans, the tilted upper body due to a heavy school bag, the hands stuffed into the pants pockets to create even more of a James Dean appearance, the gentle giant stature and that hilarious hair. A mess, what a mess.

Initially, it is a helmet, a Viking battle helmet decorated with two fierce horns. Then the silhouettes of two warring, rival clans clashing at the center of his head. Now he's like a nineties' Medusa, the long uncontrolled bangs of dark hair that entwine, knot, twirl, tangle, shine, slither and dance to their own beat.

The character whom I now recognize suddenly halts as a horde of miniature, hyperactive girls surrounds him. He towers over them potently as a tree among grass. The grass tickles and blows at the towering tree from all sides and the tree smiles appreciatively, politely giving each blade of grass its due attention. The giant is obviously amused with his subservient groupies and happily surveys his crowd of followers. He slowly starts his cool walk toward me. The obedient fans move with him; he is the nucleus of this cell of excitement.

I grin, enjoying this daily phenomenon of the celebrity. I pass the star among his

groupies, throwing in a gentle punch to his shoulder and cynically commenting, "Oh, my cool little brother," and he smiles, responding, "Yeah, I don't see you with any, chump!"

Continuing to walk down the hallway, I beam. "Chump!" I say to myself over and over, and chuckle. Looking over my shoulder, I see his tiny silhouette at the other end of the hallway, hair and all, like a tree among the swaying grass. You've got to love him.

*-Ben Cohen-Leadholm, II*





## SOLITUDE

I crane my neck and peer down the tunnel, hoping to see the approaching headlights of the next train. To my dismay, all I see is a dark void. Off in the distance, something creates an eerie, blood-curdling shriek that echoes throughout the tunnel which, unfortunately, has the acoustics of a cathedral.

I walk all the way to the edge of the platform, until I am standing with just my heels on the wide yellow stripe, the toes of my sneakers directly above the third rail, four feet below. This is quite dangerous, especially with virtually no one in the station to help me if I do happen to fall. For a moment, I totter on the brink of uncertainty as I nearly lose my balance. Satisfied with this near brush with death, I take a tiny step backward.

Out of the corner of my eye I see a sleek furry body of nondescript brown color nimbly dart from one rail to the other. I discover with slight repulsion that it is in fact a rat, and there are many more, even larger ones, where that came from. Suddenly the tracks come alive, bulging and shifting in every direction, as if composed entirely of legs and fur. I check my immediate area for any vermin, and seeing none, make a dash for the nearest bench. I relax only when this mass migration of rodents has ended.

From my seat I am given an almost panoramic view of the station. The clock mounted on the wall directly across from me reads 10:41. (I guess the trains don't run very well at this time of night.) The white and black sign hanging above my head is supposed to say PARK STREET, but some profanity, inexpertly scribbled in indelible black marker, covers the first three letters. Now it reads @!#K STREET. The very bench I am sitting on is totally covered with carvings of initials and tags, symbols and phone numbers. Wads of bubble gum are strewn about, both on the bench and the floor.

My eyes wander to the far end of the platform. It's not empty, after all. A redolent bum lounges on the staircase, and an MBTA attendant is trying to rouse him. Oblivious to their surroundings, a young couple is entwined in an embrace. There are two tired-looking men in business suits, probably on the way home from a late evening at the office.

My gaze shifts to the ceiling. Buzzing, glaring, yet strangely dim fluorescent light bulbs illuminate the entire station, casting weird, obscure shadows into the far corners. An aura of soot, visible in the beams of gray light, hangs in the air. This lends a stench of decay, urine, train exhaust, and stale air which has never seen the light of day to the station. A sudden breeze from the tunnel stirs up the atmosphere, scattering piles of paper and litter everywhere in little whirlwinds.

In spite of the presence of other human beings nearby, I feel very alone, and a chill slithers down the back of my neck. The starkness, the total grayness of the concrete walls, floor, and ceiling, and even the rats make this place seem like a lifeless, desolate hell. This is like some vast, bleak, subterranean cavern directly out of a fairy tale. All that are missing are flames and little red men with pitchforks. I once again peer down into the tunnel, half-expecting to see a dragon or some other terrific creature appear. Perhaps my train was eaten by one.

My musings come to an abrupt end when I become aware of a deep rumbling sound, which shakes the very fiber of the walls around me. Looming up in the distance and constantly coming closer is a massive hulk. As it emerges into the faded light, I realize that it is not my dragon after all, but my belated and long-awaited train.

*--Nancy Shaffer, II*

## TWENTY PAINFUL MINUTES

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it, then fine!" I shout into the telephone, slamming down the receiver. The phone bangs on my finger on its collision course with the switch hook. I scream even before I feel the pain. Then I feel the throbbing and my finger gets hot. I try to forget about my finger and begin to think about the conversation that just occurred.

First, I'm angry. My blood struggles to match the temperature of my swollen finger. I am a tea kettle, almost at the boiling point. I take a pillow from my bed and throw it at my dresser. It knocks over Snugglepuss, a snow white teddy bear with eyes like coal and a dark brown triangular nose. Snugglepuss makes no sound when he hits the ground. He bounces once, then lies still on his back, his jet black eyes staring at the ceiling. This infuriates me. I need noise. I stomp over to my stereo and press the power button. The music is too loud. My ears ring and my arm quickly extends to turn down the volume.

It is not until the moment that the sound level reaches 1.5 that I recognize the song. It is our song, the song that the D.J. played at the dance last year where my shoes were too tight and my head was a pincushion from all the bobby pins that held my hair in place. When we stepped on the dance floor, I was floating on a magic carpet and my hair was free from new-fangled contraptions. Hearing this song at this precise moment rises the tea kettle temperature a few degrees.

Now I'm sad. I retreat to my bed and lie on my back. I fix my eyes on the ceiling. I feel that familiar stinging in my nose, and I know the first tear is about to form. My left eye fills with a blob of water. The aqueous mass is slow in leaving my eye, but it finally emerges and crawls across my temple into my left ear. Another tear forms in the same eye and moves in the same direction, but at a quicker pace. I shift my head and the tear takes a different route, and proceeds toward my mouth. I taste it. It's salty. My right eye begins to make the tears as well, and they are soon in mass production, running north, south, east, and west, creating a road map on my face.

I turn on my stomach and begin to sob, quietly at first, then louder, until I am forced to bury my head in a pillow because the kettle is boiling and is beginning to make a high-pitched wail. My favorite pillow, the soft one with animated characters on it, is lying next to Snugglepuss. One of the cartoon animals has his eyes fixed on the ceiling. The pillow remaining on the bed unofficially belongs to my cat. It is hard and lumpy, like a bowl of oatmeal that has been left on the kitchen table to grow cold and lonely. I am uncomfortable. I turn my body violently. All of a sudden I can't breathe. My body racks and I fight to cough. I eventually succeed in doing so and take in oxygen once more. I slowly lapse into silence.

Now I'm pensive. I'm on my back, studying the ceiling again. The zig-zag cracks resemble the tearstains on my face. I wonder how I look in the mirror now. I bet I look totally disgusting, distorted, and mutated. I wonder what he would think if he saw me now. I wonder. . .

I sit up with a start. It takes a few seconds for me to realize that the phone is ringing. I pick it up.

"Hello," I say in a broken voice.

"I'm sorry."

My heart jumps.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing. Just leave me alone."

"You really want me out of your life?"

"Well. . ."

"I'm on my way over...okay?"

"Okay," I whisper.

I softly hang up the phone. Someone turns off the fire under the tea kettle and the water cools. I rush into the bathroom and look in the mirror. I look disgusting. I splash water on my face. It is freezing cold. I make my head a pincushion and return to my room. I search through stacks of cassettes until I find the one I want. I put it in the deck. I play it. I watch the wheels rotating the tape and the music subtly sneaks out of the speakers. It's our song. I wait for him to come so I can ride the carpet and my hair can be free.

—Rachel Skerritt, II

## INFATUATION

Infatuation is an inspiration of foolish passion, which drives people to do illogical things. We've all experienced it. It comes in a variety of forms and it is carried to different levels. It strikes people almost as quickly as it deserts them.

There is no sensible explanation to how people become infatuated. Infatuation is based on irrational feelings and superficial lust. Sarah has been in the same class with John since kindergarten but she never paid much attention to him; he was just another boy. One day, she sees John walking out of the gym in his dirty sweats and for the first time she notices that his quirky little smiles and his familiar brown eyes are sort of cute. Suddenly, for no apparent reason she believes she's in love with him. Another possibility is that Sarah meets John at a party for five minutes and immediately she decides she must marry him. Now, the way John walks, holds his pencil or chews his sandwich has an unexplainable appeal. Almost instantaneously, his hair looks cleaner, his shoulders appear broader, and his face seems more chiseled and Greek god-like.

Trapped in puppy love, Sarah carries this frenzied fever for John with her everywhere. When the teacher calls on her, she answers with a daydreamy "Huh!" She imagines walking on the beach with him and slow dancing at the prom with him to Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight." She draws hearts on the back of her book with his and her initials in them. She starts testing her new names: Mrs. John Allen, Mrs. Sarah Allen, or Mrs. Sarah Smith-Allen. She plays their brief conversation over and over in her mind, digging for a deeper, more passionate meaning behind "How did you do problem eight on the trig test?" She practices dialogues. Only when she actually speaks to him, she forgets the English language and her tongue feels as if it is covered with glue. She calls his house five times a day just to hear him say "Hello!" and holler the annoying grunt that it is a crank call. She discovers his favorite pastime is basketball and she tells him, "I love it, too, I never miss kickoff!" She even walks up two flights of stairs, around the corner, and down the corridor, so she can "accidentally" run into him. At the same time she employs the subtle approach. She ignores him or she pretends she doesn't care that much about his life. She tries to act cool and reserved. She absolutely denies she likes him to anyone who asks, "Don't you think he's cute?" She fears that any sign of friendliness will reveal her secret crush.

Infatuation is a mythical fantasy. Besides the fact that John likes basketball and food, Sarah knows nothing about him. However, she has conjured up this misty dream of who she wants him to be. She is so blinded by her overwhelming burst of unbridled adoration that she completely misses the real person. Nine out of ten times, infatuation is unrequited, because it is a one-way fantasy. It can be very painful. An empty feeling fills the wounded heart that yearns longingly for what it shall never have. It hurts so much that one believes the world has crumbled.

However, when Sarah realizes that John doesn't live up to her perfect image of him, she becomes disappointed and she rapidly stops worshipping him. John is a nice guy, just not her ideal guy. Sarah falls out of infatuation. Then she asks herself "How could I've liked him? Was I under some spell?"

Often people confuse love and infatuation as the same things. Love is based on understanding, trust and a strong friendship. A relationship that builds itself on infatuation usually ends because it doesn't have those deep components to hold it together when the lust is gone. The love that seemed eternal at first fades fleetingly.

There are several types of people who become infatuated. The first ones are the teenyboppers who proclaim their everlasting love to the New Kids On The Block. This is the Beatlemania, teen-idol-revering type of infatuation. There are the scarier ones like the psychotic IF-I-Can't-Have-You-Then-Nobody-Can crazy stalkers. Finally, there are the everyday puppy love cases like the kid behind you in history class who sends you candy and flowers with silly roses-are-red-violets-are-blue messages.

As irrational and blinded as infatuation is, it is a healthy part of one's life. One may do a variety of senseless things while infatuated, yet there is no feeling compared to being in love with someone, even if it's in one's vivid imagination. After Sarah recovers from John, she'll become infatuated again and again with Tom, David, Jeremy, Ben, Joe, Eric etc. until one day she finds the love she's been searching for.

*--Susanna Poon, I*



## THE FOUNTAIN

There was something to that place which she did not understand. But she loved the way that its silvery-blue panes reflected the sun into her eyes and hurt them, as she sat on the green square by the fountain, drinking pink lemonade and waiting. The fountain was temporarily out of service, and long-haired skater boys played in the dry pit where dirty water was usually splashed by bad little wet children.

Today, however, was an unusual day. A man was coming to the city. This man wore black clothing and spat poetry from a mouth which was visibly encrusted with metallic fillings. This man was her favorite man in the world. He would be in the fountain soon, this mysterious man.

She chewed her straw excitedly. A van drove onto the sidewalk by the green. Two bulky men came out and began setting up speakers and equipment in the fountain pit, while shooing away the skaters. She watched them, sweating in the escalating heat and anticipation. She looked up again at the building, and thought again on its mystery. What was eluding her was the purpose of the edifice. Its gleaming stories stretched toward heaven, but she was familiar with the use of only one of them: the very top floor was the plateau from which one could view the expanse of the city. She recalled her formative years, when her fifth grade class had boarded the velvety elevator, and they had all screamed in unison when their ears popped. She did not remember the observatory itself, only the feeling of being one of twenty pained young voices calling out for relief that was not there.

She was so glad that it was not like that anymore. She was no longer part of any group. She could be alone and happy. Crowds sapped the energy from her soul. She could be in crowds at school, in the hallways, and retain her individuality. She could live independently. Then she would go home, and her mother would yell at her and give her money to force her to be social. But this did not work. She was so alone, so happy.

She glanced down at the newspaper article in her lap. She skimmed over its words, finding them ignorantly laughable. "Controversial. . . wears only black. . . statements. . . muddy

philosophy. . . cult following. . . manipulative. . . beatnik. . . seems quite. . . hippie. . . purple prose. . . senseless rhetoric. . ." She snorted at these lies, and looked up from the page. Other people must have read about the oddity, and they assembled around the fountain. She overheard a couple talking. "Yes," said the man, "this oughtta be a hoot."

Finally, her famous man stepped into the fountain and approached the microphone. "Alone," he shouted. She listened happily and as he yelled out aimlessly. "The world was my oyster? The world isn't any body's f—ing oyster. The oyster died years ago. That's what they don't know. All those teachers who fill our heads with their own anguish and then they laugh at us. And nothing. Nothing means anything. They promised everything. Our praise was nothing."

Her star philosopher poet man was singing to her in their own special language. She learned her feelings from him, as she tried to relate to his problems.

"'What is love?' they ask me. Well, as long as all is one--and it is and will remain so--love is nothing. Because all is nothing."

She thought about this. Could it be true? Love was not nothing. It was the only real thing. The only true thing. She loved her beatnik star, his brown hair falling around his pale face as he lit a cigarette. He was the only one who saw the truth. She believed in him. Sometimes he wrote for obscure little magazines. She always found his work, and was sustained by reading it. She had learned that he sometimes spoke publicly, and she wanted to seek him out and follow him. He had been near there once before, and she had gone to hear him. That was when she had fallen in love with him. And now, he spoke again and denounced the only thing that she knew to be real: her love for him. She had never met him. She had never spoken with him. But he had rejected her brutally when he rejected love.

The feelings she had felt seemed real. Now, however, she realized that it had just been another teeny-bopper fantasy. Her hero may have been alternative, but her feelings had not been. She thus resolved to become dedicated to what her dreamy



Jesus preached. She would not be devoted to him. That was silly. She would find sustenance in his words, his truth.

She wondered why his teeth were such a mess-- so covered in caps, crowns and fillings. She reminded herself again that it was not the physical aspect that mattered. It was his words that flowed to her brain and filled her insides with hostile relief.

He spoke on. "Nothing is real. You are all liars. You lie to yourselves and to your children, because you speak of God and community when all you really have is hate." Tears came to her eyes. He felt no hate for anything. He was lying.

"HATE! Hate, hate, hate. It is all you'll ever have, so it's all you'll ever be."

"No!" her brain screamed. She was the only one who was there to take him seriously. Everyone else was there to laugh. So, he was addressing her, directly, without knowing it. And his words were mean ones.

"None of you know of love. Love is nothing. You all hate me for saying this to you, because people will always kill the one who brings them the truth."

Her charlatan king, her comic shop Socrates, was lying as he hissed through his crumpled teeth. She wanted to run away, as her tears flowed freely down her face, leaving puffy pink tracks. Just then, she heard it. A drip from the farthest recesses of the fountain in which her fallen Messiah was spewing his reality at the mocking masses.

By some miracle deep in the heart of the Water and Sewer Department, the fountain was running. Only her ears, suddenly sensitive, could hear it: the almost silent water flowing, but still deep within the pipes. A little trickle, a tiny gush, and volt upon volt of electricity would stream into his body as he clutched his microphone. She stood, crying at the death of her latest God, but smiling at the sweet resurrection that she was now to bring about.

She bolted to the fountain and pounced upon the dark-clad man. She dragged him up the

four stone steps which separated the mini-abbyss from the laughter-filled green. Water poured from the dirty spouts at the back of the fountain, hitting the cords and speakers, to create pretty fireworks which popped and flashed within the confines of the pit. She laughed breathlessly at their brilliance, as children tried to struggle from the protective grip of their parents, to get a closer look at the lethal spectacle.

She had shoved her man out of death's gaping, explosive hold. She thought that he would feel love, now that he had been shown it. Now he would understand. But he only cursed at her and insisted that she had ruined his plan to leave the world in the most dramatic way possible. "I planned to bite down on the microphone," he said.

She felt a sudden, immense distaste for the one she had loved. His preoccupation with death was fine, but why trouble all of these little children by burning and bleeding into the place where they played? Why sentence innocent spectators to watch his death? This disdain was not something she admired. So, she childishy protruded from her mouth her tongue, and sent pellets of happy saliva flying to his face.

She skipped merrily home, quite pleased with the realization that, since the man was a lie, love was terribly real, as were happiness and hope. The oyster was not dead.

*-Ann McCarthy, I*

## AND SO I CRIED

And so I cried. . .  
I cried a thousand tears over the blood of my people  
Tears that could not be wiped away  
Tears over my people  
who sweat and toiled in the hot, burning sun  
Tears over the blood of my people  
who worked to save the souls of other men

My people  
who were worked to death

And I cried. . .  
I cried a thousand tears over the bodies of my people  
Bodies that had seen the harshness and cruelty of other men  
Bodies that were kept in boundaries  
Bodies that had been ravaged by the scorching lash  
of the thick belt which seemed to cling to their backs

And so I cried. . . .  
I cried a thousand tears  
And I cried. . . .

*-Alanna M. Bragg, I*

## DRIVING WITH BOB

Bob is a Driver's Ed teacher. In order to understand what it was like spending my six, excruciatingly long, frustrating hours driving with him, it is first necessary to know a little about him. He's about the height of Paul Bunyan though hunched and emaciated with long, draping limbs. He resembles a middle-aged disco dancer with his grizzly, coarse black hair blown back and wavy with the ends curling at the base of his neck, and his shirts are always unbuttoned to expose his scrawny chest accentuated by sparse hairs and a thick gold chain. He's a chain smoker, laughs uproariously at his own jokes, and often enjoys rambling endlessly about his personal life, his students, and his students' personal lives. Finally, and most importantly, his voice is incessant and annoying as that of a pudgy-faced, whiny brat whose tantrums can leave the shoppers of an entire mall frazzled and infuriated as well as laced with intonations of condescension as employed by game show hosts.

At 4:05 p.m. (Bob is not a slave to punctuality), the rusty-white compact car would come into sight down the street, pattering under the direction of a quivering novice. Once the driver approached the school, it was necessary to parallel park in the arm's length between a sky-blue Porsche and a towering delivery truck. It was then that Bob's utterly comatose facade would become an expression of sheer terror, clutching his hair, sneering and letting out primal shrieks and expletives. Once the car was fully secured, the victim would toss me the keys and sprint home, shaking his head in sympathy for my plight.

Once behind the wheel, Bob, without even looking up, would say to me, "Okay Molly, starter up and pull out when it's safe to do so." So I adjusted the mirror, pulled the seat back and forth several times (squashing his gangly legs against the dashboard), fastened my seatbelt, looked to the left, looked to the right, and, with no other precaution left, I pulled out.

In order to make such an unpleasant experience tolerable, one must master Bob's Rule of the Road. In summary, follow all traffic rules, indicated in the handbook, unless no one is looking, and remember leash laws make it allowable to strike any inconvenient animals. Any speed be-

low the 25mph is "old lady slow" according to Bob; however, any speed above 35mph might cause him to clutch the arm-rest until his knuckles turn white. Always take your lawful right of way; never let anyone infringe on it!

It is vital that one never gives Bob any personal information about one's self, for Bob knows the class rank, social status, and shoe size of every student he has ever taught and can remember and pass on such information up to two decades later. He also enjoys passing on stories of his own many adventures: The time when he was arrested for drunk-moped in Aruba, the many dilapidated engines he reconstructed as a mechanic, and the flocks of women who worshipped him like a Greek god in his youth. He'll also, free of charge, pass on timely advice: never go to Washington, never go to Latin School (an unsatisfied graduate), and never hit and run (you'll only get caught).

His advice, his anecdotes, his patient instruction inspire me still—well, I remember them anyway. I don't have much choice because he's everywhere: driving by with his newest victim and sitting outside his office. There's no escape.

*--Molly Morrison, I*



## EL NACIMIENTO

Sweat trickles from my brow.  
I scream my pains of birth,  
Pushing ever forward to the future,  
Nurturing you in my heart,  
Holding you always to my bosom.  
'I love you!' is my cry.  
You feed upon my soul.  
My life's blood I give freely on your behalf.  
'Push' they say to me,  
'Push ever forward'; he's the future.  
Pain laces through my body.  
Screams tear from my throat.  
Screams of pain, screams of joy,  
Screams of the past mistakes,  
of the future's brightness.  
My belly rises high and hard  
Bursting with life  
As my heart bursts with love.  
'Push, push,' they cry.  
'She is the future.'  
I taste the blood; I taste the pain.  
I cry the tears.  
I cry for you, for me, for us,  
And I wonder at the happiness  
Mingled with an overcast of sadness.  
Pushing, pushing am I  
to your future?  
My breast heavy with nourishment,  
My arms ready to cradle you,  
my mind alive with wonders.  
Yesterday, tomorrow, don't exist.  
There is only today, this hour,  
This minute, this very second.  
There is only you  
Push, push, pushing forward  
to the future.  
You are my wonder, my little  
Miracle, my future.  
I wait in anticipation  
Enduring for you the pains of time,  
Enduring always the pain,  
Giving myself to you always.  
So I wait and I pray  
And I  
Push, push, push  
To the world's future.

—Anonymous, III

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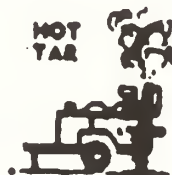
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